CROSSGEN COMICS
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MYSTIC
Tony Bedard
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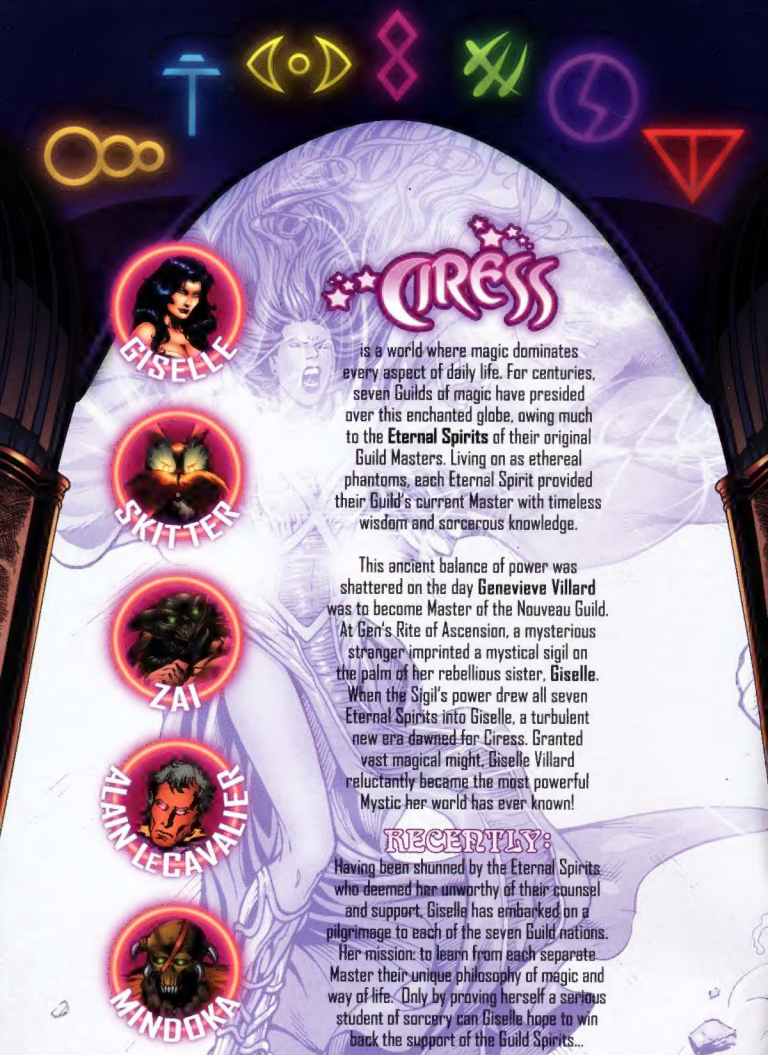
Andrew Crossley



CIRESS

is a world where magic dominates every aspect of daily life. For centuries, seven Guilds of magic have presided over this enchanted globe, owing much to the **Eternal Spirits** of their original Guild Masters. Living on as ethereal phantoms, each Eternal Spirit provided their Guild's current Master with timeless wisdom and sorcerous knowledge.

This ancient balance of power was shattered on the day **Genevieve Villard** was to become Master of the Nouveau Guild. At Gen's Rite of Ascension, a mysterious stranger imprinted a mystical sigil on the palm of her rebellious sister, **Giselle**. When the Sigil's power drew all seven Eternal Spirits into Giselle, a turbulent new era dawned for Ciress. Granted vast magical might, Giselle Villard reluctantly became the most powerful Mystic her world has ever known!

RECENTLY:

Having been shunned by the Eternal Spirits who deemed her unworthy of their counsel and support, Giselle has embarked on a pilgrimage to each of the seven Guild nations. Her mission: to learn from each separate Master their unique philosophy of magic and way of life. Only by proving herself a serious student of sorcery can Giselle hope to win back the support of the Guild Spirits...

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NOT ANOTHER ONE!
Oh, NO. LOOK WHO IT IS.
HE MUST HAVE TRIED TO CLIMB TO SAFETY.
ANCESTORS...!
NOTHING THAT STALKS THE TALL GRASS COULD DO SUCH DAMAGE...
...NOTHING BORN OF NATURE...
AND HAVE ANY OF YOU EVER SEEN TRACKS LIKE THESE?
BE WARY, KINSMEN. THE WIND IS SHIFTING, AND WHATEVER DID THIS MIGHT STILL BE NEARBY.
TOO TRUE.
MASTER ZAI!
THE BEAST THAT DID THIS WILL HUNT THE SAME TERRITORY UNTIL ALL PREY IS EXHAUSTED.

WE HEARD A CRY IN THE NIGHT, AND WHEN WE ARRIVED...
MOKELE. HE WAS A GOOD SHAMAN. A GOOD *FRIEND*.
THE SKIES WILL WEEP ON THE DAY I TELL HIS WIVES WHAT BEFELL HIM.
I CAN'T STOP LOOKING AT HIS *FACE*. WHAT WAS THE LAST THING THOSE EYES *SAW*?
HIS *EXPRESSION* TELLS US ALL WE NEED TO KNOW.

KINSMEN, HAVE ANY OF YOU EVER FACED A CHIWANDA?
NO...?
IT IS A PREDATOR THAT STALKS THE PLANE OF THE ANIMAL-SPIRITS. BUT SOMETIMES ONE CROSSES OVER TO OUR WORLD --
-- OR IS SUMMONED BY BAD MEDICINE.
THE CHIWANDA HAS NO REAL SHAPE OF ITS OWN. IT FEEDS ON FEAR. IT HAS A PECULIAR GIFT FOR INSTILLING THAT EMOTION IN THOSE WHO SEE IT.
HOW MANY HAS THIS CHIWANDA CLAIMED FROM YOUR KRAAL?
SEVEN SO FAR, MASTER.
YES. I FEAR THERE WILL BE MORE IF...
...IF WE DO NOT...
MASTER?
STAND READY!
WHAT IS IT, MASTER ZAI?
SOMETHING OUT THERE...
SORRY. I DIDN'T WANNA INTERRUPT...
IT'S HERE! GET BEHIND ME!

HEL-LO! DON'T YOU PEOPLE EVER GET VISITORS?!

LET'S SEE HOW IT FARES AGAINST *STEEL*, MASTER!
HOLD!
THE *CHIWANDA* MAY BE A MAGICAL BEAST, BUT ONE THING IT COULD *NEVER* DO IS UTTER A *TRUE SPELL*.
IT APPEARS AS THOUGH WE HAVE A VISIT FROM THE REAL THING. WHAT DO YOU *WANT* FROM THE LAND OF THE SHAMAN GUILD, GISELLE VILLARD?
AND HOW IS IT THAT *YOU* SPOKE SUCH A SPELL? YOUR SISTER SAID THAT YOU NEVER REALLY TROUBLED YOURSELF TO *LEARN* MUCH MAGIC.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I'VE BEEN *PRACTICING*.
A FEW *THINGS* HAVE HAPPENED TO ME SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU. THEY MADE ME *REALIZE* SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
SEE, I'VE BEEN USING THIS THING TO CAST EVERY SPELL IMAGINABLE WITHOUT EVER *BOTHERING* TO LEARN WHAT MAGIC REALLY *IS*.
THAT JUST SEEMS... *DISRESPECTFUL*, DON'T YOU THINK?
LIKE EATING THE HARVEST WITHOUT PLANTING THE SEED.
WELL, I DON'T WANT TO BE LIKE THAT.
I'VE BEEN STUDYING NOUVEAU GUILD MAGIC, AND I'M HOPING YOU'LL TEACH ME THE *SHAMAN* WAY...
THEN YOU'VE WASTED YOUR JOURNEY. I HAVE *NOTHING* TO TEACH YOU.

DO YOU MEAN YOU *CAN'T* TEACH ME...OR YOU *WON'T*?
I HAVE *THREE* VERY GOOD REASONS NOT TO WASTE TIME ON YOU, GIRL.
THE *FIRST* IS THAT I'M BUSY PROTECTING MY PEOPLE RIGHT NOW.
THE *CHIWANDA* IS A VERY REAL THREAT, AND I MUST PLACE THEIR SAFETY ABOVE SATISFYING YOUR CURIOSITY.
THE *SECOND* IS THAT I DO NOT EXACTLY REGARD YOU AS A FRIEND. RECALL, WHEN LAST WE MET, YOU WERE BEATING THE *LIFE* OUT OF ME.
I WAS TRYING TO *SAVE* YOU! YOU GOT *TURNED* INTO ONE OF ANIMORA'S PET MONSTERS, IN CASE IT SLIPPED YOUR MIND!
EXACTLY! AND DID YOU EVER THINK TO *CHECK UP* ON ME AFTER THAT BATTLE?
THE SHAMAN LANDS WERE *VIOLATED* BY THE DEMON QUEEN'S RAMPAGE!
AND WHY DO I NOW LACK THE *MOJO* TO *REPAIR* SO MUCH OF THIS DAMAGE? WHY DOES MY CATHEDRAL STILL LIE IN RUINS, WHILE ALL MANNER OF SUPERNATURAL PESTS PROWL THE LAND?
BECAUSE *SOMEONE* RIPPED THE *ETERNAL SPIRIT* OF THE SHAMAN GUILD OUT OF ME! YOU *STOLE* MY CONNECTION TO THE *INFINITE*---!
NOT TO MENTION THE *OTHER* SIX GUILD SPIRITS! *THAT* CRIME, BY THE WAY, IS REASON NUMBER *THREE* FOR NOT HELPING YOU.

WHY BOTHER ME, ANYWAY? THE WISDOM OF MASTER MINDOKA DWELLS WITHIN YOU NOW.
WHY NOT LEARN FROM A FAR GREATER SHAMAN THAN I?
WELL, HE'S SORTA NOT SPEAKING TO ME THESE DAYS.
HA! JUST AS YOU DESERVE! YOU HAVE BEEN NOTHING BUT TROUBLE TO US GUILD MASTERS, GISELLE.
GO HOME AND LET ME DEAL WITH THE CHIWANDA FREE OF DISTRACTION.
SO YOU PLACE YOUR PEOPLE'S SAFETY ABOVE ALL, huh?
WHAT ABOUT PLACING IT ABOVE YOUR OWN PRIDE?
CAN'T YOU SEE I'M EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED RIGHT NOW?
HOW SO?
YOU HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE, BUT NOT THE RAW POWER YOUR GUILD SPIRIT USED TO PROVIDE.
ALL I HAVE IS RAW POWER, AND ALL I'M ASKING FOR IS THE WISDOM TO CONTROL IT.
LET ME HELP YOU STOP THIS CHIWAWA--
CHIWANDA.
RIGHT. LET ME HELP, AND MAYBE I'LL LEARN A THING OR TWO THAT'LL KEEP ME FROM SCREWING UP EVEN WORSE. WHAT HARM COULD IT DO?

THERE HE IS.

GREETINGS, LeCAVALIER.
WE'VE MISSED YOUR COMPANY, ALAIN!

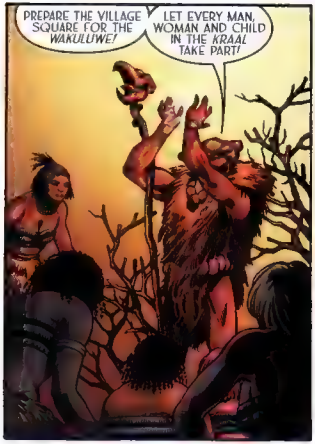
OH.

STILL FIXATED ON THAT HOPELESS GIRL? HOW DREARY.

COME, MINDOKA. THE NOUVEAU SPIRIT WILL REJOIN OUR FELLOWSHIP WHEN HE TIRES OF SEEING THAT GIRL DISGRACE HIS GUILD.

MINDOKA...?
HE'LL BE ALONG IN A MINUTE, HEROTUS.

KINSMEN, THIS IS GISELLE VILLARD, VISITING FROM THE NOUVEAU LANDS, WHERE HER SISTER IS GUILD MASTER!
SHE IS HERE TO HELP RID US OF THE CHIWANDA THAT HAS ALREADY TAKEN FAR TOO MANY OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS
HI

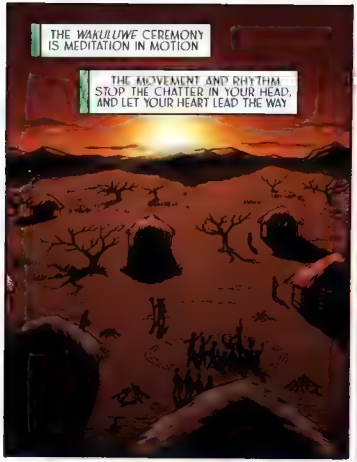

PREPARE THE VILLAGE SQUARE FOR THE *WAKULUWE!*
LET EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD IN THE *KRAAL* TAKE PART!

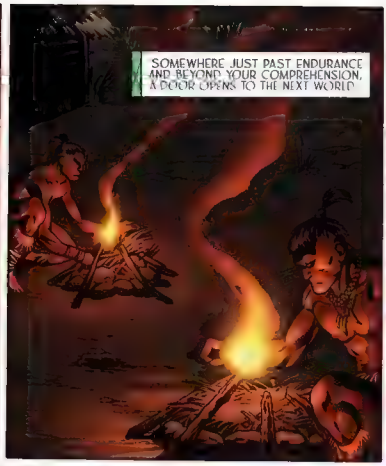
WE WILL SHOW HER THE STEPS TO THE DANCE, BUT GISELLE WILL BE THE TRUE SHAMAN TODAY
I BEG YOUR *PARDON?* I'M NO SHAMAN! YOU HAVEN'T TAUGHT ME A SINGLE *SPELL*, MUCH LESS THE *WACKY-LULU* DANCE!

I SAID EARLIER THAT I HAD NOTHING TO TEACH YOU BECAUSE YOU *ALREADY* CARRY ALL THE ANSWERS WITHIN YOU. *EVERYONE* DOES.

JUST AS EVERYBODY MUST FIND THEIR *OWN* PATH TO THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN
WE BELIEVE THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL MUST BE THE SHAMAN OF HIS *OWN* LIFE

"KEEP IN MIND WHAT A SHAMAN *IS*. A SHAMAN IS SOMEONE WHO HAS A *DIRECT* EXPERIENCE OF THE MYSTICAL REALM.
"NOUVEAU PRIESTS, ENCHANTRESS NUNS, TANTRIC ACOLYTES, DARK MAGI MONKS... THESE *ARE* ALL MERE *FUNCTIONARIES* OF THEIR BELIEF SYSTEMS.
...THEY *DESCRIBE* MYSTIC TRUTHS THAT SLUMBER BENEATH THE WAKING WORLD, AND THEY *SHOW* YOU WAYS OF LIVING IN ACCORD WITH THE SUPERNATURAL.
BUT THE SHAMAN IS NOT TOLD. NOR SHOWN THE WAY. THE SHAMAN HEARS THE CALL, AND GOES TO *SEE* THESE THINGS *FOR HIMSELF*.
"OFTEN, THIS JOURNEY TAKES *YEARS* OF PREPARATION
BUT *YOU* HAVE A *SHORTCUT* TO POWER


THE *WAKULUWE* CEREMONY IS MEDITATION IN MOTION
THE MOVEMENT AND RHYTHM STOP THE CHATTER IN YOUR HEAD, AND LET YOUR HEART LEAD THE WAY


SOMEWHERE JUST PAST ENDURANCE AND BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION, A DOOR OPENS TO THE NEXT WORLD

YOU WILL ***KNOW*** IT WHEN YOU ***SEE*** IT

MASTER ZAI !

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING--! EVERYTHING'S CHANGING
YOUR EARTHLY CONSTRAINTS ARE SLIPPING AWAY, GISELLE VILLARD! YOU ARE CROSSING OVER!
SEVEN SPIRITS, IT WORKED! HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WOULD
WOULD
AH-

OOF
WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU MUST HAVE BROUGHT SOMETHING WITH YOU THAT FORCED YOU BACK
SOMETHING UNRESOLVED
Um. HOLD THAT THOUGHT
FIRST, WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
ONCE YOU BEGAN TO CROSS OVER, THEY ALL TOOK COVER, ACCORDING TO PLAN
-SIGH- WHAT PLAN?
YOU DIDN'T THINK THE WAKULUWE WAS SOLELY FOR YOUR BENEFIT, DID YOU?
IT WAS A TRAP FOR THE CHIWANDA — AND YOU ARE THE BAIT
THE BEAST COULD NOT HELP BUT BE DRAWN TO THE MYSTIC ENERGY THAT BURNS WITHIN YOU!
I'M THE BAIT?! AND IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO YOU TO MENTION THIS?!
YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO DISTRACTED TO MAKE ANY PROGRESS AT ALL
NOW, GIRD YOURSELF! IT IS HERE!

BRRAAARRKK
I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS THING WAS FORMLESS
IT IS!
THEN WHY -UNGH- DOES IT LOOK LIKE A SERIOUSLY MESSED-UP GIANT BIRD?
IT DOES NOT! IT APPEARS TO EACH PERSON AS HIS OWN DARKEST FEAR!
HE-DUKE

SO WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO YOU?
YOU!
RARK
NO WONDER YOU ATTACKED THE MOMENT YOU SAW ME!
SEVEN SPIRITS, AM I THAT BIG A THREAT TO YOU?
IT...IS NOT YOU. IT IS WHAT YOU REPRESENT...
...SUCH POWER ENTRUSTED TO ONE SO UNREADY.
...LIKE THE CHILD WHO DROVE THE SUN-GOD'S OX CART TOO LOW ACROSS THE SKY.
WE'VE GOT A MYTH LIKE THAT IN NOUVEAU, TOO.
LOOK, I CAME ASKING FOR YOUR HELP SO THAT I WOULDN'T SCORCH THE WORLD!
SO HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO CHANGE HOW THE STORY TURNS OUT!
RA-ARK

COME ON, ZAI - TEACH ME!
VERY WELL WHAT KIND OF BIRD DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
TALLER THAN A MAN! BIG HEAD, STRONG BEAK, PURPLE FACE, WITH GREENISH BROWN FEATHERS -
WHOA!
PURPLE FACE? THAT IS THE KUNGU BIRD!
SO THAT IS WHAT HELD YOU BACK FROM THE ANIMAL SPIRIT PLANE!
~UNH~ HOW ABOUT WE ~URN~ KILL THIS MONSTER BEFORE WE ~UNGH~ GET BACK TO MY PERSONAL PROBLEMS?!
THAT'S JUST IT: WE CANNOT KILL IT!
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WITH SUFFICIENT POWER TO SEND IT BACK TO ITS OWN PLANE!

LISTEN! IN THE BUSH, THE KUNGU LAYS ITS EGGS IN THE NESTS OF OTHER BIRDS, WHO ACCEPT AND REAR THE KUNGU CHICK
BUT THE KUNGU CHICK DENIES THE OTHERS THEIR FOOD. ONE BY ONE, IT KICKS ITS SISTERS OUT OF THEIR OWN NEST!
CAN YOU SEE THE CONNECTION ?
WHAT ARE YOU--NO NO WAY! NOT ME!
I HAVE NOT DENIED MY SISTER A THING!
YOU THINK I EVER WANTED THIS POWER? I NEVER ASKED FOR ANY OF THIS!
SOME WEIRDO AT GEN'S RITE OF ASCENSION SLIPPED ME THE SIGIL WITH A HANDSHAKE! IT WAS FORCED ON ME. UNDERSTAND?
SO WERE THE GUILD SPIRITS FOR THAT MATTER!

BARK?
I NEVER MEANT TO TAKE ANYTHING THAT WASN'T MINE -
- ANY MORE THAN GEN MEANT TO TAKE MY BOYFRIEND! SOMETIMES, THESE THINGS JUST HAPPEN
SOMETIMES YOU JUST GET DEALT A LOUSY HAND, BUT THOSE ARE THE CARDS YOU HAVE TO PLAY!
SO YOU CAN TAKE WHATEVER GUILT I HAVE LEFT FOR MESSING WITH GEN'S LIFE AND CHOKE ON IT, STUPID BIRD!
MY SISTER LOVES ME, AND I AM GOING TO DO RIGHT BY HER!

Oh
SO MUCH FOR THE MIGHTY *KUNGU*, huh?
THERE IS SOMETHING ***UNNATURAL*** ABOUT YOU
I CANNOT DECIDE IF IT IS SIMPLY THE ***SIGIL***, OR SOMETHING ABOUT ***YOU*** IN PARTICULAR THAT MAKES YOU SO ADEPT
BUT I AM GRATEFUL THAT YOU ***ARE*** SUCH A QUICK STUDY. I COULD NEVER HAVE EXORCISED THAT *CHIWANDA* BY MYSELF
Er. YOU'RE WELCOME I THINK
YES. THANKS ARE IN ORDER. AS ARE ***CONGRATULATIONS***.

I DID NOT WANT TO BELIEVE IT WHEN MY NOUVEAU BROTHER TOLD ME YOU HAD CHANGED, BUT YOUR ACTIONS ARE VERY PERSUASIVE
MASTER MINDOKA!
PLEASE, ZAL, STAND AND FACE ME AS AN EQUAL
I THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER HEAR YOUR VOICE AGAIN!
YOUR PRESENCE HERE, ON A SPIRIT PLANE, WITH HER, MAKES OUR MEETING POSSIBLE.
WE MUST NOT DENY HER ANYMORE, UNDERSTAND? THE TIME HAS COME TO WORK WITH GISELLE VILLARD
THANK YOU I HOPE THIS MEANS YOU'LL TEACH ME MORE ABOUT YOUR WAYS
OF COURSE THOUGH I EXPECT THE LEARNING WILL BE MUTUAL
AS LONG AS WE ARE ALL TOGETHER, PERHAPS WE CAN ARRANGE FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE SHAMAN CATHEDRAL ?

Urgh!
SORRY I DIDN'T THINK TO DO THIS WEEKS AGO
NICELY DONE
TELL ME, GISELLE. HAVE YOU DECIDED ON THE NEXT GUILD TO WIN OVER?
ALLOW ME TO MAKE A SUGGESTION.

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MYSPELLINGS

Please let us know if you don't want your name and address printed. Mark your e-mails as "okay to print." Letters may be edited for content and length.

Hello,

I must say this is my favorite CrossGen book in terms of character and story. I have read comics for years, but it was the days of *Crisis* and *Secret Wars* that drew me into serious collecting. Reading depictions about the impact of the deaths of Supergirl and Flash and the evolution of Sue Richards into the Invisible Woman crystallized in my mind that stories could provoke imaginative ideas having to do with changes and constants. Change happened in 1985, restructuring a comic universe and showing a girl acknowledge her place as a woman. The constant was good stories based on solid characterization.

MYSTIC proves that change and constants still make for powerful stories. I have enjoyed Giselle focusing her life and goals. Her talk with Ingra has helped her realize that it's time for a new phase of her life. My favorite part of one of the latest issues was Giselle's conversation with her former self. It is amazing to reflect back on our past thought processes.

I like the wrap-up of the former story involving the mob. This book has no intention of dangling plots without reason. I think it gives it a polished shine. Please keep it up.

Thank you,
Jesse Mitchell
sinisteri@hotmail.com

You're right, Jesse, Giselle has certainly gone through a number of changes lately, some of them, such as those caused by Animora's influence, involuntary. However, even that experience seems to have had a positive result, as it led to the little talk she had with Ingra that you mention and did, among other things, help effect a serious attitude adjustment. One by one, Giselle is winning over her resident Guild Spirits, too, so her new approach to her responsibilities is reaping good returns. After her success with the Shaman Guild Spirit this issue, she has only five more to go!

❖

Dear MysSpellings,

I have been collecting comics for a long time, from Frank Miller's writing stuff to Todd McFarlane's drawings. I was re-introduced to collecting by a friend of mine. At the comic store I saw the trade paperbacks of MYSTIC and enjoyed the artwork and writing. Brando and Ron did a terrific job. I ended up buying the trade paperbacks and the rest of the issues. I was sad to hear about Brando moving on and Fabrizio continuing the series, but he has done a superb job. I look forward to more issues. Thank You.

Joey Castillo
fools_love@hotmail.com

Although I think it's fair to say that it's been a harder adjustment for some than for others, it's good to know that, by and large, our fans are open-minded enough to embrace two such opposite styles as those of Brandon and Fabrizio on the same book, Joey. Thanks for your letter and welcome to the ranks of MYSTIC readers.

❖

Dear MysSpellings,

Not bad. Not bad at all.

Firstly, congratulations to Al Rio and Roland Paris on some beautiful art in MYSTIC #25. I'd never come across Al's work before, so it was a lovely surprise. I particularly enjoyed some of his page designs and all the background details. Loved the gun hanging in mid-air next to Giselle. The look of Nouveau City was excellent and Matt's coloring gave it a fresh, open feeling. Nice work, guys.

Storywise, Tony did good. Giselle's reaction to Gen and Thierry was not what I was expecting, but fitted in so well with the whole theme of Giselle growing up. Duke Abaddon was a nice villain with his own agenda and a twisted sense of honor. My favorite part, though, had to be Giselle facing down her party-girl past and finally just walking away from it.

Thanks for another great read.
John Koenigsbeck
j.koenig@blueyonder.co.uk

Al and Roland did do a great job, didn't they, John? As you say, Al's pencils are wonderful and we're lucky enough to have him back in these pages for issue #30. While you're waiting for that, you can catch his version of some of our other characters when he takes up the penciling chores for SCION #28 and #29.

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MYSTIC (in the subject line)

CrossGen Crosscurrents

by Gina Villa

CrossGen has been racking up a number of awards lately. The Diamond Gem Award came to us in April when, for the second consecutive year, we were voted the Comic Publisher of the Year in the Under 5% Market Share category by retailers using Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc. Also in April, RUSE earned three "Squiddies," which are awards given out by Usenet's rec.arts.comics community. Squiddies are the second-oldest still-existing industry awards after those from the Comic Buyers' Guide. RUSE #1 tied with two other books for "Best Comics Novella" and one other series for "Best New Series." RUSE's Laura DePuy again won "Best Colorist." More honors may yet come our way in August, since RUSE or the RUSE creative team has been nominated in five categories for the 2002 Eisner Awards. In addition to "Best New Series" and "Best Continuing Series" nods for the book itself, Mark Waid has been nominated for "Best Writer," Butch Guice for "Best Penciler" and Laura DePuy, again, for "Best Coloring." As good as they are, however, the RUSE folks aren't the only studio representatives to be singled out for their outstanding work. The Spectrum jury has chosen two CrossGen pieces to be included in the prestigious annual collection of the best in sci-fi, fantasy, and comic illustration, *Spectrum 9: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*, which will be published in October of this year. The CrossGen art to appear is the cover of MERIDIAN #14, by Steve McNiven, Tom Simmons, and Morry Hollowell, and page 14 of SOJOURN #4, by Greg Land, Drew Geraci, and Caesar Rodriguez. Congratulations to everyone for this well-deserved recognition.

In addition to our Compendia and Comics on the Web, CrossGen continues our expansion into other media. Announced recently were deals for wireless games with Enorbus Technologies, two separate development deals through Branded Entertainment, and a multi-year agreement with FOG Studios.

Enorbus Technologies is the dominant provider of wireless entertainment (such as characters, icons, and games) in China and reaches more than 150 million users in Asia alone. Enorbus has agreed to be the exclusive developer of CrossGen properties for wireless communication products and to distribute and market them for the worldwide marketplace, including the Pacific Rim. In addition to its Asian connections, Enorbus has relationships with leading technology companies such as Ericsson, Intel, Motorola, Nokia, Packet Video and Siemens. The first CrossGen product is expected to be on the market by the last quarter of this year.

Branded Entertainment's Michael Uslan has reached agreement on CrossGen's behalf with both Threshold Entertainment and Graven/Maddelena Pictures. Threshold has optioned the rights to SIGIL and SAURIANS for feature film, television and video games. In the past, the chairman and CEO of Threshold, Hollywood mover-and-shaker Larry Kasanoff, has optioned such properties as *Mortal Kombat* and *Duke Nukem*. He feels that the richly-textured world of SIGIL is unique, original, and just the kind of property they look for. Wes Graven and Marianne Maddalena are the powers behind Graven/Maddalena Pictures and they are close to optioning a deal for a live-action, primetime weekly television series based on MYSTIC. Maddalena, president of the company, feels that MYSTIC could attract the same type of audience as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Michael feels that these deals are only the beginning of CrossGen's opportunities to bring its stories and characters to both large and small screens.

FOG Studios, the oldest interactive licensing team in the business – and one of the most influential – represents the last cog in the all-star multimedia licensing machine which CrossGen has put together. FOG joins Michael Uslan and famed entertainment attorney Nancy Newhouse Porter, each of whom is also at the pinnacle of their respective areas of the entertainment business. FOG's task will be to forge relationships between CrossGen and publishers and developers of interactive games for the PC, game consoles (PlayStation 2, X-Box, Gamecube) handheld games, coin-operated games, etc. Since 1979, FOG's principals, Ed Dille and Barry Freidman, have placed more than 4,000 interactive titles into the marketplace.

CROSSGENERATION COMICS, INC. RECOMMENDED GOOD READ!

The Recommended Read of the Month is brought to you by Chuck Dixon, Writer of CRUX, SIGIL, and WAY OF THE RAT.

Recommended Reads

Superman: The Dark Side Trade Paperback, published by DC Comics, by John Francis Moore and Kieron Dwyer.

This trade paperback collection of the prestige mini is prime New Gods fare. Two of the most severely underrated talents in comics re-imagine Superman's origin. Instead of landing in bucolic Kansas and being raised by the kindly Kents, Kal-el crash lands on Apokolips and is taken under the wing of the mighty Darkseid. What follows is classic Big Theme storytelling with acres of Kirby-level violence. Moore riffs Kirby's pacing and exchanges perfectly while bringing his own considerable chops to it as well. Dwyer works his own magic – This guy is an undiscovered genius who clearly digs Jolly Jack to the maximum. He builds on the original vision and creates a deeper, wider Apokolips. The place seems more real than ever under his hands with rich detail and oppressively huge architecture.